

Askham Bryan Annual Parish meeting

MINUTES of the Annual Parish meeting of Askham Bryan
held at 7:00pm on Thursday 21st May 2026 in the Village Hall.

PRESENT Jason Boakes (Chair).

In attendance: Seven other residents and the representative of 1st Askham Bryan Brownies (non-resident), one Ward Councillor and the Clerk of the Parish Council (PC).

It was **resolved** that Jason Boakes to chair the meeting as the PC did not have a chair.

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

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

2. 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, on the website and on the Parish Council's Facebook page.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 22nd May 2025.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22nd May 2025 having been circulated, be approved, all in favour.

4. Parish Council report.

i. Vice-Chair's report.

In May 2025, the then Chair of the PC, Simon Peers resigned from the PC after many years of being a Councillor, the later part of which he had been Chair. Opportunity was therefore taken at the 2026 Annual Parish Meeting to thank him for his giving of his time during this period and it was noted that, although no longer a Councillor, he was still involved in the life of the Village, e.g. the Christmas Trail and the activities of the Scouts movement.

The audit of the accounts had been completed and a positive report had been received.

Time constraints meant that it was no longer possible to have a Councillor as a representative of the PC on the Village Hall Management Committee, there was instead a standing agenda item at PC meetings to consider any matters raised by the Village Hall Management Committee.

The PC continued to consider planning applications and where there was an application to remove a tree, the PC would make representation that a replacement be planted, either on the location or the tree being felled, or (if this was not possible), elsewhere within the boundaries of the applicant's address.

The Natural Environment Committee were thanked for all their work.

Thanks were also given to David Hartley and the other members of the Recreational Area team for the work they do in looking after that piece of land and cutting the grass and to David for allowing his shed to be used for the storage of the lawn mower.

The Peers family and members of the PC were thanked for their contribution to the Christmas celebrations and the tree raising.

Askham Bryan College were thanked for the tree cutting work they had done.

The report concluded with an appeal for more people to come forward as new blood was both welcome and needed.

ii. Statement of Parish Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026.

The Clerk of the PC had circulated a statement of Parish Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 which showed income and expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2025 in one column and for the year ending 31st March 2026 in another column. He went through the report and explained the reasons where the 2025 figure differed significantly from the 2026 figure. The total receipts in the year were £11,693.25 and total expenditure was £7,862.64. The end of year balance was £18,590.15. The 2024 annual website fee had been paid in April 2024 and the 2025 fee in March 2025 giving the impression that there was a significant increase in annual costs in the year ending 31st March 2025, the figure in the 2026 column represented one annual subscription. There had been a payment to the to the Diocese of York of £600 in 2025 for the right to use a path across Diocesan land to access the Recreational Area from the pond. This had previously been paid once every ten years and had become due in 2020 but due to an oversight by the Diocese had not been claimed at the due time leading to backdated claim in 2025. The 2026 figure reflected the fact that going forward, this would be claimed annually. Regarding income, the double-taxation payment for 2025-26 had been paid on 2nd April 2026, just too late to be considered in the figures for 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. There had been no income from the 2025 Christmas events and the decision to open an interest earning account part way through the 2024-25 financial year meant that the 2026 column (being the first twelve month period following this decision) showed an increase in interest earned.

iii. Report on the Precept for 2026-27.

The Clerk of the PC reported that the precept for 2026/27 was £11,073 having been the same amount in 2025/26. This was a real terms increase of zero and a reduction in precept once inflation was taken into account.

5. 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 four reported crimes from May 2024 to July 2025 and none from August 2025 to April 2026 (there was ten months' worth of data as the person collecting the crime figures was unable to produce data for September and October). One crime had been committed on corporate premises (a theft of a

drone and a quadbike with insulin injections from the caravan park). There were two consecutive nights in May 2025 of groups of people congregating in cars and making a nuisance into the early hours and one in July regarding a concern of unauthorised filming by a neighbour. The scope of the reports did not cover every type of crime, for example, it was noted that report did not include instances of hare coursing.

6. Village Hall report.

Askham Bryan Village Hall delivered the following report;

Askham Bryan Village Hall is a registered charity, and the Trustees are dedicated to keeping the hall available and in good condition for everyone in Askham Bryan and the nearby area.

This has been another steady year, with a reasonable level of bookings (about a third of the total income from hire is down to one booking). We regularly receive compliments about the hall. We also received a generous legacy donation.

Our biggest fundraiser, the annual Spring Fayre (including a plant sale), was a huge success, bringing in £950. We couldn't have done it without the wonderful donations of plants, cakes, and bottles, and the hard work of our volunteers. The Natural Environment Committee also had a table.

This year, our total income was more than our expenses. Maintenance and project work were light, so we were able to retain a small surplus. But since the hall is over 130 years old, unexpected costs are always just around the corner. Since 2019, we've spent over £24,000 on keeping the building in good shape.

We've teamed up with the parish council again to host and support the Village Christmas Tree, which is such a lovely addition to our village during the dark December evenings.

We've also created our own website at askbryanvillagehall.co.uk. This will be a great resource for anyone interested in hiring the hall and will also give us more control over promoting events.

The future of the village hall is still a worry. The committee is getting older and needs some fresh, younger members to help manage the hall and come up with new ideas for its future.

7. Women's Institute report.

The Women's Institute had sent the following report.

The Women's Institute in Askham Bryan will be celebrating its 65th anniversary this year. We are a group of twenty-seven members and always delighted to welcome visitors to our meetings.

We have a very eclectic programme each year with a variety of interesting talks and demonstrations. In the past year we have heard about startup businesses, history and various charities. We meet on occasions, over than our regular meeting each first Wednesday of the month, to have lunch or go to the theatre. We are not limited to our own individual group but have the opportunity to join in events organised by the North Yorkshire East Federation and nationally.

I would encourage any lady in the village or surrounding area to come along as a visitor to meet us and find out more about the WI.

8. Brownies report.

Askham Bryan 1st Brownies delivered the following report.

1st Askham Bryan Brownies has fourteen registered girls (from Askham Bryan and the surrounding villages) and a leadership team consisting of four adult leaders and one Duke of Edinburgh volunteer. We also have the support of an additional leader and two unit helpers for events.

We continue to enjoy a range of activities on a weekly basis - a mixture of activities from the Brownie programme and ones based on events in the year.

In April we took part in the Saint George's Day Parade in York with members of Girlguiding and Scouting from across York. We enjoyed taking part in the Christmas disco with Rainbows, Brownies and Guides from other units in the local area.

A highlight from this year has been our first unit residential event since pre-Covid. We spent the weekend at White Rose House in Wheldrake and attended a nationally organised event called Cityscapes in York city centre.

We were honoured to be once again asked to decorate the village hall Christmas tree.

We are looking forward to our Chip Hike later this term (a walk to Copmanthorpe followed by chip eating), taking part in the county Brownie Fest event at York Scout Activity Centre (formally Snowball) in June, and supporting the refreshment team at the village garden party.

We will mark the end of this summer term with our annual picnic and games (to be held outside if the weather allows)

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

9. Natural Environment Committee Report.

The Natural Environment Committee delivered the following report.

Introduction

The Natural Environment Committee (NEC) was established in June 2021 and is a subgroup of Askham Bryan Parish Council. The main purpose of the committee is to champion the conservation of the natural environment within the parish, focussing on the village pond; the recreation area; the triangle of land near 149 Main Street; and land at the entrance to St Nicholas Croft.

Work of the NEC in 2025/26

9.1 Management of the village pond

- In Oct, NEC members carried out their annual clearance of saplings and overgrown planting assisted by villagers.*
- In March, ivy was removed from trees at the front of the pond.*

9.2 Recreation Area

- Four ash trees (suffering from Ash Die Back) were removed from behind the mound.*
- The dead ash trees were replaced by assorted saplings from the Woodland Trust pack that were originally planted elsewhere in the recreation area.*
- In agreement with the Recreation Area Maintenance Team, a border along the edge of the recreation area containing saplings and bulbs, has been delineated as a 'no mow' area so that plantings can develop and mowing is made easier.*
- Additional bulbs were planted in the autumn (daffodils and bluebells) and are thriving.*
- Additional bird boxes were installed by students from the college.*

9.3 Land near to 149 Main Street

- The bulbs (daffodils and snowdrops in particular) are becoming well established and a local family continue to cut the grass.*

9.4 Entrance to Saint Nicholas Croft

- Residents are mowing the grass, cutting back brambles and monitoring the area.*

9.5. Protecting the environment (pollinators)

- As was reported in the last annual review, work by the NEC in previous years has meant that there is less maintenance work needed in the four areas listed above. This gives the NEC time to promote environmental conservation more widely, beginning with the encouragement and protection of pollinators.*
- In March the NEC built a 'Bug Hotel' in the Recreation Area and are posting articles in the village newsletter to encourage residents to do what they can to encourage and protect pollinators and wildlife.*

9.6 Budget 2025/26

The NEC has a budget of £250 and in 2025-26 spent £119.99. They had intended to spend £106 on trail cameras. This amount has been added to their budget for 2026-2027.

Communication

The NEC uses two main methods of communicating with villagers – the Askham Bryan WhatsApp Group and the Village Newsletter.

Plans for 2026/27

The NEC will continue to work with other interested groups, including the Recreation Area Maintenance Team, Askham Bryan College and interested villagers.

Jo Barker has produced a schedule of work to cover the four areas above including the timing of regular maintenance work throughout the year and less frequent but more extensive work (e.g. tree work requiring specialist input). Please see appendix.

The NEC will also continue to focus on making the village a haven for pollinators (bees, butterflies and insects). Plans include an NEC stand at the Village Hall Spring Fair to promote our work and put in an information board near the pond with details and pictures of nearby wildlife.

NEC Members

Jan Bennett remains as Chair of the NEC supported by Kathryn Nolan as Vice Chair and Laura Hardie has joined the committee this year. The Chair would like to thank both past and present members of the NEC for their time and commitment especially for the hard work they have done in the village outside of meetings.

The NEC would also like to thank Askham Bryan College for its invaluable help, advice and support this year.

Recommendation

The Parish Council is asked to receive the report of the NEC and approve its content.

10. Report from Saint Nicholas' Church.

No report had been received and there was no formal representation at the meeting from any member of the Church.

11. Report on progress in setting up a new charity independent of the Parish Council.

A clause in the constitution of the Allotments for Stone and Gravel charity prevented it from giving money to anything which could otherwise be supported from the PC which meant that money was going into the Charity with very limited opportunity to spend it. The Charity Commission had declined an attempt to change the constitution and this had led to the suggestion of creating a new charity, independent of both the PC and the Allotments for Stone and Gravel charity. Cllr. Wiseman had proposed a revamp of the charter and had written a constitution eighteen months ago

which had gone to the Charity Commission. The updated constitution defined the aim of the Charity as to support the community or projects in Askham Bryan and to receive charitable donations. An example of how the new charity could support local projects would be new playground equipment. The Clerk took an action to WhatsApp Cllr. Wiseman within a week if he could not locate the submission to the Charity Commission and if necessary, the application would be resubmitted.

12. Report of the Allotments for Stone and Gravel charity.

The money in this fund was increasing but there was frustration that the Charity doesn't do anything for the reasons given in the previous part of the agenda. There had been a family bereavement but the quarterly payment from Hopwood Coaches was unaffected by this and was still being received.

13. Open discussion of Parish affairs.

There was a question about the basis for the agenda and which organisations were invited to submit reports, in particular, the Rainbows had not been invited. The Clerk had not been aware of this group's activities within the Village and would be happy to send them an invitation from 2027 onwards. The representative of Askham Bryan 1st Brownies would send him the contact details.

There was a discussion about the limited number of people taking on roles. New blood was needed and there was discussion about ideas to get more people involved. There had been a vacancy on the PC for a year and the Village Hall Management Committee was also in need of more people to become involved. Word of mouth was probably the best way to encourage people to become involved. This issue needed to be communicated with the message that involvement gave people the ability to make an impact. The newsletter could be used to appeal for people to come forward. PC meetings seemed to deliver little immediate change and they were looking to have a strategy to give direction to their meetings.

The meeting closed at 8:10pm

Signed

Chair
May 2027