

ASKHAM BRYAN PARISH COUNCIL

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

held on Thursday 17 September 2026 at 6:30pm in the Village Hall.

PRESENT:

Jan Bennett (Chair)		
Julie Barber	Laura Hardie	Kathryn Nolan
Steve Bassford	Shannon Lickers	Danny Whitehead
Peter Christopherson		

In Attendance: The Clerk.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Jo Fell.

2. **Declarations of interest:** None.

3. **Public Participation**

There were two members of the public in attendance who were interested in joining the Committee. The Terms of Reference states that the Committee shall consist of "not more than eight voting members" and it was therefore agreed that Shannon Lickers join the Committee as a voting member with Danny Whitehead as a non-voting member.

4. **Minutes of the meeting of the Natural Environment Committee held on 16th July 2026.**

Matters arising.

Recreational Area.

- Bat boxes had been installed by the college.
- Regarding the alternative planting for the copse, Steve may have some in glass houses.
- David had been given a message about cutting the long grass between the saplings.

Pond Area.

- The pond clearance had been done.
- North Yorkshire Bat group came and did a talk and left a bat detector next to the pond. They were working through the data and would confirm the results in due course. Consideration was given to doing a walk around the Village.
- There had been a positive response to the pond-side information sheets.
- Equipment was needed to identify insect life. Steve had sweep nets and pots. The survey would be repeated throughout the year to allow for seasonal variations. Steve would put together a programme of when the surveys would be done starting in the spring with one for each season. Shannon also had a survey.

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

- A hedgehog house had been installed at the junction of Saint Nicholas Croft and Main Street. The invoice for this had been sent to the Clerk. The owner of the nearest property to the hedgehog house had been made aware. The hedgehog house was predator proof. Some leaves had been put into it.

Plans for 2026.

- The date for the next spring fair in the Village Hall would be 15th of May. It would be held at the same time of day as the 2025 spring fair.
- It was felt that some of the tree work which had been done on Westwood Lane was within the boundaries of Askham Richard Parish Council (PC) and therefore not appropriate for the Committee to comment on.

Having considered all matters arising, it was resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th July 2026 (66-68) having been circulated, be approved, and that the Chair be authorised to sign.

5. Recreational Area.

See Matters Arising (item 4) above.

6. Pond Area.

See Matters Arising (item 4) above.

Additionally it was noted the PC had agreed a budget of £1,000 towards an interpretation display board to go by the pond which would give information about the types of wildlife which could be found there. The PC had then delegated this matter to the Committee. It was felt that an information board would be too static as once it had been read, people would not read it again and it would not keep up with any changes and consequently it was felt that a notice board would be more appropriate. The Clerk would investigate the cost of a notice board to include fitting within the £1,000 budget.

7. Village Green.

It was agreed to continue with the arrangement where a villager cuts the grass.

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

See Matters Arising (item 4) above.

9. Plans for 2026 and other matters.

The Clerk would set up a WhatsApp group for members of the Committee to communicate. Larger documents would need a shared drive, Shannon agreed to set this up.

10. To consider an email from a resident regarding the planning application by Askham Bryan College.

Askham Bryan College had submitted a planning application for the creation of a 3G Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) with perimeter fencing, hardstanding areas, storage container, floodlights, an access footpath, and a huddle. This had led to several objections including an email from a resident who felt that under the first paragraph of the Terms of Reference, the Committee should submit a corporate response. The Clerk advised that Parish Councils are empowered to delegate some of their functions to committees but such delegation should not duplicate functions of the full PC and in this case, a response from the PC as a corporate entity (or which to Committee was a part) had already been submitted.

11. To note that the PC were considering an “adopt a tree” scheme where the PC provides a tree for planting by residents with sufficient garden space.

- a. The Committee was supportive in principle of the proposal by the PC to have an “adopt a tree” scheme but felt that appropriate guidelines would be needed. The scheme should be restricted to particular species of tree. The Recreational Area could be used as a nursery to develop whips into saplings (some were already well enough established to be used for the scheme). The Woodand Trust copse pack of native species would be appropriate. People would collect trees under supervision (to avoid people digging up trees not intended for the scheme).
- b. The PC scheme to have a series of speaking engagements was noted and it was felt that Soo Wong (a villager who releases rescued hedgehogs) who was giving a talk on the charity she represented could be included in the programme with this being publicised in the magazine. An email could be sent to Cllr. Wiseman as he was taking the lead on this

scheme. This event was being held on 3rd December 2026 and would be advertised. Kathryn would go back to Jo. This would be paid for out of the budget.

Actions

- KN: continue to follow up on 'bat data' and look into a possible 'bat walk' in the Spring
- SB: Explore ways to involve students and possible plantings in copse
- SL: Find a way to share findings from surveys - 'key findings' and 'detailed data'
- JBb :Liaise with PC re: trees for free
- JBk : Article for Village News (include invite to hedgehog talk - if SW agrees)
- JBe: liaise with David Wiseman on a joint programme of talks (including access to PowerPoint)
- Keith: investigate notice boards and set up a WhatsApp group for the Committee.

12 Date of next meeting.

19th November 2026 both at 6:30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 7:25pm.

Signed

19 November 2026