

ASKHAM BRYAN PARISH COUNCIL

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

held on Thursday 16th May 2024 starting in the Recreational Area at 6pm and then moving to the Village Hall.

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

In attendance: Keith Langley (Parish Clerk) and David Hartley (Recreational Area working group).

1. Meeting with the Recreational Area working group lead.

The meeting started with a meeting with David Hartley of the Recreational Area working group to agree with the working group on maintenance of the area, in particular the wooded area and maintaining biodiversity.

There was a dead tree with a branch which was only being held up because it was resting across other branches, this needed to be taken out as soon as possible. Students of the college could do this. Lots of rubbish had been cleared and the cleared areas would be planted with native species such as wild privet. Bulbs were considered but it was felt that they would be damaged by children playing and running around. The college had spare blackthorn and hawthorn in the form of plugs which could be planted anytime. Wild roses (Guelder Roses) were also considered. Steve would send the Clerk a list of suitable native species. David would continue to dig out brambles and bird boxes would be put up in the autumn. In the long term, the ash trees would be gone. Bare rooted trees could be bought at £40 each. Trees from the mixed copse pack could be moved to the cleared area and the line of these trees could be turned into clusters. Moving these existing trees would not impact the budget which could then be used to buy two or three larger ones. Those present would sort out specific detail between them. Two areas of brambles would be preserved, i.e. the area behind the swing and the area in the corner. A health and safety concern was expressed regarding exposed bare steel on the mound. A contact from the college would give a lesson on mowing, Steve would email David the details. A dead tree right at the back of the wooded area was looked at, it was stable and therefore would be left.

The meeting then left David and relocated to the Village Hall.

2. Apologies for absence.

Lisa Marriott and Peter Christopherson.

3. Declarations of interest.

None.

4. Public Participation.

There were no members of the public present.

5. Minutes of the last meeting.

There were several changes to the draft minutes but email issues had prevented anyone seeing the revised minutes and it was therefore agreed to defer this to the July meeting and meanwhile, the revised draft minutes would be resent.

6. Recreational Area.

There was a summary of the onsite meeting;

- The college would deal with the tree with the split trunk.
- A dead tree would be taken out.

- Native plants would be sought for biodiversity.
- A small number of the saplings obtained from the Woodland Trust would be moved.
- The bramble patch behind the single swing and the patch of brambles and nettles near the gate would be left.
- The Committee and the working party would work together to specify which trees required action.

7. Pond Area.

The pond was looking good. Algae levels would be monitored with a big clean up being done alternate years.

8. Village Green.

The tree had been planted and the bulbs had come through successfully. Donated snowdrops had been put in. Jo would cut the grass once the bulbs had died down. David had offered to help. A bench was considered. Bulbs would be planted in the autumn.

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

Jo and Peter had had a quick look. Julie and Peter had filled green bins. Shrubs had been planted by a former neighbour. Brambles had been cleared and there would be an ongoing programme to keep this area tidy. The willow tree in the middle was not looking healthy and was getting swamped. The brambles at the back needed clearing out. Someone who lives nearby cuts the grass. Julie would suggest to Peter that he talk to David but as Peter was not in attendance, nothing was agreed at this stage. This this area would be discussed at the next meeting.

10. Any other business.

- Nothing further had been heard from the Askham Bryan College Hedgehog Working Group who had attended the January 2024 meeting. This was getting back up and running following some internal difficulties.
- Bat Boxes – Steve had sent something through about this. A survey course was starting at the College and advice could be given on how to improve habitats. It was suggested that at the July meeting, the Committee could walk down to look at the pond. Two bird boxes were still by the water and needed relocating. The locations of bat boxes near the pond would be an agenda item for the next meeting. The best time to put these up was early autumn.

11. Date of next meeting.

18th July 2024 at 6:30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 6:52pm.

Signed

Chair
18 July 2024