

ASKHAM BRYAN PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

PRESENT: Jan Bennett (Chair)
Julie Barber Jo Fell Peter Christopherson
Steve Bassford

In attendance: Keith Langley (Parish Clerk).

1. Apologies for absence.

Lisa Marriott and Kathryn Nolan.

2. Declarations of interest.

None.

3. Public Participation.

There were no members of the public present.

4. Minutes of the last meeting.

Kathryn had suggested several changes to the minutes. It was **resolved** that the minutes as revised be approved. The copy presented to the Chair for signing took into account these suggestions. There was no further progress regarding the revisions to the March minutes.

5. Recreational Area.

Steve had no new updates from the College regarding the remaining trees but any necessary work does not have to be done in the autumn/winter. Since the last meeting, Steve has circulated information about native plants that would be suitable for planting under the trees around the recreational area. It was agreed that David Hartley would be invited to the September meeting where we will decide on the plants. The cost of the chosen plants will depend on how they are sourced (seed, cuttings, plugs). £80 has initially been earmarked from this year's budget. We will also agree with David the extent of the central area to be mowed regularly by his team. Over the winter, the committee will develop a plan for managing the remaining area.

6. Pond Area.

The water level had gone down slightly but not enough to move the nest boxes overhanging the pond. There was discussion about the loosestrife and other possible maintenance that may be required in the autumn. A decision will be made at the next meeting.

7. Village Green.

Responsibility for mowing the village green is unclear. Jo and David have both offered their services and Patrick sought permission to mow the grass in the last week of May but it was left to Julie's son to eventually cut it. Jo has agreed to liaise with those involved and report back at the next meeting . There was a discussion about planting more bulbs (including daffodils and snowdrops) to enhance those planted last year. £80 has been set aside in the budget.

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

Julie and Peter have both done some work on this area but we need to agree a long term plan. The shrubs and tree require regular maintenance resulting in significant amounts of garden waste. Residents have used their own green bins in the past but are less willing now that garden bins carry a cost. There are various options including:

- Clear the area completely and return to grass (advantage easier to maintain / disadvantage the cost of the initial clearance and removal of the rubbish)
- Keep the tree (Twisted Willow) as a feature, remove all the other plantings and return to grass. (advantage is that leaving the tree reduces clearing costs but the disadvantage is that maintaining the tree will involve costly tree work from time to time)
- Develop a plan to keep some of the plants. Steve has offered the services of some second year students to help and advise.

Julie and Peter will canvass views from the residents of St Nicholas Croft and the long term plan will be discussed at the September meeting. (£90 of this year's budget is available)

9. Terms of Reference.

It was noted that the Parish Council rolling programme of review of policy documents was due to consider the Committee's Terms of Reference. It was suggested that the responsibilities be amended from "the trees within the Recreation Area" to "the trees *and understorey* within the Recreation Area".

10. Any Other Business

Jo had a field maple which was getting too big for her garden. It was agreed that she could move the to the Recreational Area in the Autumn.

11. Date of next meeting.

19th September 2024 at 6:30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 7:19pm.

Signed

Chair
19 September 2024