

ASKHAM BRYAN PARISH COUNCIL

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

held on Thursday 19th September 2024 at 6:30pm at various locations around the Village before moving to the Village Hall.

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

In attendance: Keith Langley (Parish Clerk).

The meeting began on the corner of Saint Nicholas' Croft/Main Street and then moved to the pond. The Committee then moved to the Recreational Area and then to the Village Hall for formal discussions. The discussions at each location are reported under the appropriate headings below.

1. Apologies for absence.

It was noted that Lisa Marriott had resigned from the Committee but was still willing to help when required. There were apologies from Jo Fell and Peter Christopherson.

2. Declarations of interest.

None.

3. Public Participation.

There were no members of the public present.

4. Minutes of the last meeting.

It was **resolved** that the minutes as revised be approved. The copy presented to the Chair for signing took into account suggestions made by Committee members. There was no further progress regarding the revisions to the March minutes.

5. Recreational Area.

It was noted that the Parish Council (PC) had an agenda item to consider a quotation for removal of a partially failed willow tree. Although the cost of this would not come from the Committee budget, consideration was given to making use of students from the College who could do this free of charge under supervision as one of their learning outcomes. The Committee carried out a visual inspection. The tree had been described as falling over the play area at present and was stuck across several smaller trees. The Committee were unable to see any tree which matched the description given and could only find two dead willow trees resting on an ash tree. There was nothing which demanded immediate action. Meanwhile, the College would try to take a look before the next meeting. Jo was owed £80 in expenses for four-hundred native spring bulbs, some of which would be planted in the woodland area. David had approved the planting.

6. Pond Area.

It was agreed to arrange a working group in late September/October to remove excess vegetation and saplings from the pond and Jan agreed to circulate an email with some suggested dates. Jan and Kathryn agreed to produce a notice requesting volunteers which would be posted on the village notice board and there would be an appeal on the village WhatsApp group. Kathryn would produce an article for the newsletter and send it to the Clerk. The two bird boxes were still to be removed.

There had been comments on the water level in the pond. The water level of the pond naturally changes with the season, and the wildlife (including the ducks) find temporary homes and return when water levels rise. Previous discussions with The Conservation Volunteers confirmed that the maintenance plan was appropriate for a natural pond. Students on the environmental conservation

course at the college would assess the pond this autumn, and provide recommendations for ongoing management.

7. Village Green.

Bulbs had been purchased.

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

Peter had carried out a survey of the residents of Saint Nicholas' Croft, a copy of his survey form had been circulated to the Committee. The overwhelming opinion of the residents was that the willow tree should be retained and some of the shrubs although those that were allowed to remain should be significantly reduced in size. Only one person wanted to remove the tree. If the remaining shrubs were small enough, then residents should be able to manage the area themselves. Most residents also said they were willing, if needed, to contribute a small amount of money towards having the work done.

One resident had some good ideas about what could be kept and what needed taking out and had been invited to the meeting but was unavailable. It was therefore felt that the Committee should note the current condition of the corner and defer any decisions until the next meeting when missing members with relevant knowledge would be present so that an informed decision could be taken and in the meantime, further advice could be sought. The close proximity of the willow tree to a number of nearby houses was noted. The property immediately adjoining the land was up for sale and the next occupants may have views about maintenance of the shared boundary.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

10. Date of next meeting.

Although the meeting would normally be bimonthly, there was need for a meeting sooner than that and therefore the next meeting would be a 6pm on 17th October 2024.

The meeting closed at 7:25pm.

Signed

Chair
17 October 2024