

# Askham Bryan Annual Parish meeting

**MINUTES of the Annual Parish meeting of Askham Bryan**  
held at 7:10pm on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025 in the Village Hall.

**PRESENT** Simon Peers (Chair).

**In attendance:** Six other residents, one Ward Councillor and the Clerk of the Parish Council (PC).

**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 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024.**

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 having been circulated, be approved, all in favour.

**4. Parish Council report.**

**i. Chair's report.**

*During the last year we processed 27 planning applications for developments and tree works within the parish. We have achieved a positive report at internal audit. We improved our governance around land registration and automated payments.*

*Cllr Dawson was appointed as the vice-chair, Cllr Barber was appointed representative to the NEC and Cllrs Boakes and Smith were appointed as the PC representative to the Village Hall Committee.*

*Thanks to enthusiastic village volunteers the Natural Environment Committee who continue to grow and are actively working on a number of projects around the village, most notably on the corner of St. Nicolas Croft. Also a big thanks once again to Jeff Challinor and Jo Fell who have unwaveringly kept the grass cut and the planters looking lovely. Thank you to our committed mowing rota who are keeping the recreation area smart to complement the new signs. We have passed a motion to ban dogs (excluding support dogs) to maintain the safety of the area.*

*Over the Christmas period the village was decorated through collaboration with the village hall committee and the church. It was great to see the return of the 12 days of Christmas trail funded by our Ward Councillor's fund through the Parish Council and constructed by Emma Peers. It was also great to see the return of the Village Christmas Tree with a revised lighting event organised by the Parish Council, this was well attended and created a relaxed environment for the village to gather together.*

**ii. Statement of Parish Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.**

The Clerk of the PC had circulated a statement of Parish Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 which showed income and expenditure for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 in one column and for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 in another column. He went through the report and explained the reasons where the 2024 figure differed significantly from the 2025 figure. The total receipts in the year were £12,115.59 and total expenditure was £8,799.23. The end of year balance was £14,759.54. A new interest earning account had been opened during the year to ensure that money not immediately needed could earn interest and transferred to the current account as necessary. 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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. There was a question about a payment to the Diocese of York of £600. This was a £100 a year fee 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 2024-25. Going forward, this would be claimed annually.

**iii. Report on the Precept for 2025-26.**

The Clerk of the PC reported that the precept for 2025/26 was £11,073 having been £10,871 in 2024/25. This represented an increase of just under 2%.

**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 six reported crimes from May 2024 to April 2025 (there was ten months' worth of data as the person collecting the crime figures was unable to produce data for January and February). All six crimes were committed on corporate premises (the college, the caravan park, the sewage treatment works). There was a case of motorcross bikes causing a nuisance in fields. The most serious crime was in the caravan park where a female had been assaulted by a male. 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 had sent the following report;

*The village hall, a building dating back to 1893, serves as a vital focal point and valuable amenity for the village. So we have a significant responsibility to maintain and preserve it for future generations to enjoy.*

*The committee's primary objective, in its governing document, is to provide the vil-lage hall for the use of the inhabitants of Askham Bryan and the surrounding area for various activities, including meetings, lectures, classes, and recreational and leisure-time pursuits.*

*It has been a steady year, with a comfortable level of regular bookings.*

*These include:*

*Askham Bryan Brownies and Rainbows  
the WI, a sewing group,  
art groups, music groups, yoga classes,  
a church group, a caravan group,  
the monthly coffee morning,  
parish council meetings, a polling station and more.*

*Earlier this month, we held our principal fundraising activity, the annual Spring Fayre, and raised £949. The Fayre is always a very pleasant village event, but we wouldn't be able to manage it without the many generous donations of plants, cakes, and bottles and the generous amount of time given by our volunteers, both from the village and outside.*

*Happily, total income is still exceeding our running costs, although taking into account our maintenance expenditure, we actually ran at a deficit last year. We have had to make a small increase in our hire charges and introduced half and full-day rates.*

*Donations are always most welcome, and I particularly want to thank David and Jo Hartley and their group of G&S friends for a generous contribution of £531. This money was put towards the new bench in memory of the late Geoff Deighton.*

*Once again, with the parish council, we hosted and supported the Village Christ-mas Tree. The tree provided a bright and cheerful feature during the gloomy De-cember evenings.*

*We have installed a digital door lock to replace the current mortice key on the front door. Every hirer has been given their own unique access code and after a few initial problems, the new system seems to be working well.*

*This year we have spent some time reviewing our policies to ensure they comply with government and charity commission requirements. We have revised our Conditions of Hire, developed a new Safeguarding Policy, and appointed a safe-guarding officer.*

*The hall passed its 5 year electrical inspection. In November, a new electricity contract was negotiated at a reasonable rate. This contract expires at the end of this December. We have also had a smart meter installed.*

*We have welcomed two new members to the committee. However, we have an ageing committee, several of which are nearing retirement, so it is vital that we continue to recruit additional new committee members to support the hall's future and its evolving role.*

## **7. Women's Institute report.**

The Women's Institute had sent the following report.

*The Women's Institute first came to the UK 110 years ago, we have had a group in Askham Bryan continuously since 1961, making us 64 this year.*

*We currently have an enthusiastic and friendly group of 29 members who meet on the first Wednesday of the month (excluding January) at 7.30pm. Our meetings consist of a variety of interesting talks and demonstrations on varied topics. In addition to the monthly get together we have various activities including lunches, theatre trips and outings. There is also an opportunity to join with other Institutes in the North Yorkshire East Federation events.*

*I would encourage all ladies in the village and surrounding area to come to any of our meetings I am sure there will be something of interest for you. It's not all jam, Jerusalem and knitting cardigans*

## **8. Brownies report.**

Askham Bryan 1<sup>st</sup> Brownies had sent the following report.

*1st Askham Bryan Brownies has eighteen registered girls (from Askham Bryan and the surrounding villages) and a leadership team consisting of 3 adult leaders and one student volunteer. We have a parent rota to support with weekly meetings.*

*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. These have recently included celebrating VE Day. This year we have had a number of visitors to the unit – Karen from SNAPPY came to talk to us about metal recycling, York Mansion House staff delivered a session on the language of the fan from the Georgian Period, and a Martin House volunteer was invited by one of our Brownies to talk about their work and what fundraising supports them to do.*

*In April we took part in the St George's Day Parade in York with members of Girlguiding and Scouting from across York. We have taken part in four district events this year with Rainbows, Brownies and Guides from the local area – an outdoor challenge day at Snowball, a campfire at Snowball, a Christmas disco and a World Thinking Day activity day.*

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

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

*We were grateful for the support of the Allotments & Gravel Charity for their support towards the travel expenses for our trip in February to Hopetown to attend the Girlguiding North East England Railway Challenge Day.*

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

## **9. Natural Environment Committee Report.**

The Natural Environment Committee had sent the following report.

### ***Introduction***

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

*Responsibility for the land at the entrance to St Nicholas Croft was also added, in response to requests from its residents, during 2024/5.*

### ***Pond***

*The Committee monitors the water level regularly and villagers have expressed concern when the level falls particularly low. However, experts have assured the Committee that the seasonal fluctuations are to be expected and no action needs to be taken. The ducks and moorhens continue to thrive and to breed successfully.*

*In October 2023 a working group, including villagers as well as NEC members, carried out major clearance work. A minor 'clear up' followed in October 2024. The intention is to continue this 'alternate year' pattern of pond clearance.*

*A number of different bird boxes have been installed around the pond in order to attract different species and the committee have purchased a bat box that will be put up near the pond once a suitable site has been identified.*

### ***Recreation Area***

*Work in this area is carried out in partnership with David Hartley's team of volunteers who take responsibility for cutting the grass and general maintenance of the central area and its equipment. NEC members worked alongside DH's team in January and February (2024) to tidy up the copse area which had become overgrown and scattered with litter. They received considerable help from staff and students from the arboriculture department of Askham Bryan College (ABC) who removed dead trees and ensured that any damaged trees were made safe.*

*The NEC, together with DH's team and ABC staff/students, will continue maintain and develop the copse area. Plans are underway to enhance its contribution to the environment by planting saplings, native shrubs and flowers. The NEC has also planted bulbs on 'the mound' and bird boxes have been installed around the area.*

*In addition, the NEC with the help of specialists from ABC, will monitor any remaining ash trees showing early signs of 'ash dieback' as further remedial work may be needed over time.*

### **Village Green**

*The rowan tree, planted to replace the horse chestnut, is thriving and the bulbs planted in September 2024 have flowered this spring; the daffodils were particularly successful. Additional bulbs have been planted to bloom next spring (2026).*

*The NEC would like to express their gratitude to the Territt family who mow the grass regularly.*

### **Entrance to St Nicholas Croft (SNC)**

*After concerns were expressed about the challenge of maintaining the shrub border at the entrance to the Croft, Peter (from the NEC) carried out a survey of the residents to establish what they wanted to happen and how much they were prepared to contribute.*

*The first priority was to cut back the overgrown shrubs and trees to improve the overall appearance and to make future maintenance easier, however, the disposal of resulting debris and waste presented a major challenge. The Parish Council kindly offered to pay for a skip and a working group, consisting of residents of SNC and NEC members past and present, carried out the necessary work in March.*

*The plan going forward is to retain an attractive shrub border that is more easily maintained and provides an increasing number of natural habitats.*

### **Budget 2024/25**

*The NEC had a budget of £250 and spent £245.39 as follows;*

<i>Skip hire (cost shared with the Parish Council)</i>	<i>£90.00</i>
<i>Supply of a Sorbus Aucuparia (Rowan or Mountain Ash)</i>	<i>£50.00</i>
<i>Bulbs for the Village Green</i>	<i>£85.41</i>
<i>Bat Boxes</i>	<i>£19.98</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£245.39</b>

### **Communications**

*The NEC communicates via the village newsletter and Jo has published articles in most editions of the Parish Newsletter giving updates and asking for volunteers to help on occasions. Posters and the display of minutes are also used.*

*More recently, the NEC has begun to use the village 'WhatsApp' group to promote the activities of working groups, in particular, to ask for volunteers as the date of an activity approaches.*

*There is also informal and on-going communication between the NEC, ABC and DH's Recreation Team.*

### **NEC Membership**

*Jan Bennett remains as Chair of the NEC supported by Kathryn Nolan as Vice Chair. There have been no resignations from the committee this year and Steve Bassford from ABC has joined.*

*The Chair would like to thank 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 especially like to thank ABC staff and students for their invaluable help, advice and support this year. The specialist work that they carry out, on the NEC's behalf, is unpaid and saves the Parish Council money*

**Next Year**

*The NEC will continue to maintain and improve areas in the village for which it has responsibility alongside increasing the range and number of natural habitats. Next year increasing habitats for bees and pollinators will be a particular focus.*

**Further point for consideration**

Previous PCs have granted individual residents the right to cultivate or plant trees on parish land near their homes which improved the appearance of the village for everyone's benefit. HOWEVER when then the residents are no longer in the village, maintenance of these areas becomes an issue. The NEC suggests that careful consideration is given to this practice which is well - intentioned but leads to problems and a financial drain on parish funds in the future

**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.**

Councillor David Wiseman was leading on this. There was no progress to report. Consideration was being given to a transfer of land.

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

The Charity's Trustees now meet once a quarter immediately following the Parish Council meeting. Income was from the bus parking and from an interest earning account which had been opened in the last financial year. A grant had been awarded to Askham Bryan 1<sup>st</sup> Brownies to pay for the cost of travel to Hopetown railway museum. In previous years, the cost of the Christmas Tree had come out of Charity funds (shared with the Village Hall). The constitution was on the website.

**13. Open discussion of Parish affairs.**

A question was raised regarding the purpose of having this meeting. The legal position was given, i.e. there was a statutory obligation to have such a meeting (between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> June). There were no rules about what should be talked about. The Ward Councillor attended Annual Parish meetings elsewhere in the Rural West Ward and felt that the one at Askham Bryan was one of the better ones.

The meeting closed at 7:45pm

Signed

Vice Chair  
May 2026