

ASKHAM BRYAN PARISH COUNCIL

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

held on Thursday 16 January 2025 at 6:30pm in the Village Hall.

PRESENT: Jan Bennett (Chair) Kathryn Nolan
Julie Barber Jo Fell
Peter Christoperson

In Attendance: The Clerk and his wife (as a non-participant).

1. **Apologies for absence:** Steve Bassford.

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

3. **Public Participation:** None.

4. **Minutes of the meeting of the Natural Environment Committee held on 21st November 2024.**
It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21st November 2024 (46-47) having been circulated, be approved and that the Chair be authorised to sign (the copy circulated contained a correction to the date of next meeting).

5. **Recreational Area**

The Committee received updates on the agreed actions from the previous meeting.

- a. Steve to arrange for students on the Conservation course to assess the copse and provide recommendations for future maintenance and planting succession. In the absence of Steve, there was no update on this action.
- b. The Clerk to send a letter of thanks to the college. This was still outstanding. The Clerk would make this a priority.
- c. Kathryn to deliver the remaining four bird boxes to the college for the Conservation students to install. These had been delivered but had not yet been installed. Two bird boxes which had been delivered earlier had been installed.

6. **Pond Area**

There was no immediate action required for the pond. The cold weather had left ice in places and a recent survey found twenty-two or twenty-three ducks and two moorhens.

7. **Village Green**

The snowdrops were coming through and the tree looked healthy.

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

Julie had advised the Parish Council that a skip would be required to deal with the clearance work and that there may be a requirement to source a tree surgeon to reduce the willow tree. She had raised this at the December meeting and this had been noted. The Committee would talk to Mike. Skip hire would be £180 for a standard size or £300 for a large size. The Committee were willing to commit £90 from their budget towards the cost of skip hire and wondered if the Parish Council would pay for the rest. A chipper was suggested as an alternative but the Committee were not enthusiastic about this option. Builders sacks would be needed. Steve was due to arrange for his conservation students to review the area and provide recommendations for tidying up the shrubs/trees whilst retaining wildlife habitats. Jan would remind Steve about the mid- February deadline. A working party would carry out the work on Saturday 1 March from 10.00 (weather permitting). Peter would send a flyer around Saint Nicholas' Croft appealing for help from the residents nearer the time. Mike Walmsley and David Hartley have already volunteered.

9. Budget 2025/26

Of the £250 budget for 2024/25, £50 had been spent on the Rowan tree supplied by the College. A further £43.30 had been spent, although this payment went out of the bank account in April 2024, the invoice was dated 21st March 2024 and as such, would be considered as part of the 2023/24 budget. This left £200 in the 2024/25 budget. At the meeting, the Clerk was presented with an invoice for £85 bulbs leaving £115, £90 of which would be used for the cost of the skip.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

11. Date of next meeting.

The decision by the Parish Council to change the dates of its meetings to the fourth Thursday of the month was noted. The impact on the Clerk was noted as he would now have two journeys to Askham Bryan in those months when the Committee was meeting. However, key members of the Committee were unavailable on the fourth Thursday of the month and it was felt that a similar switch by the Committee was not an option. However, these Committee members could still manage the fourth Thursday of the month in May and July. Therefore, on that basis, the dates of meetings for the remainder of 2025 would be;

20th March, 22nd May, 24th July, 18th September and 20th November.

Proposals for bat boxes would be considered at a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 7:05pm.

Signed

Chair
20 March 2025