

MINUTES OF A MEETING

held on Monday 12 January 2026 at 7.00pm in the Creighton Hall

Present: Terry Howells (TH) – Chair, Sophie Barber (SB), Andy Hindle (AH), Margaret Watchorn (MW), Mike Elder (ME), Raymond Carss (RC), Kevin Redgrave (KR)

1. Apologies: Clive Middlebrook (CM), Ian Brown (IB), John Young (JY)

2. Declarations of Interest: None.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 8th December were accepted as a true record by all: proposed SB, seconded AH and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising:

Boundary trees: KR has replied to a query concerning the planning application (*Post-meeting note: permission has been granted*). TH will forward KR's contact details to the adjacent property owner to agree the next steps. Some trees still need to be crown reduced or removed as approved in the previous planning permission. MW will produce a poster for display in the noticeboard to explain why the work is taking place. TH
MW

Fencing: A local fencer has agreed to do the work but has to arrange a date and access with the adjacent landowner. KR suggested that Coast Care may be able to assist volunteers in the summer if the work is not completed by then.

New volunteers: One villager has joined the WhatsApp group and hopes to help. Another person has offered their services to produce artwork. TH, MW and KR will meet her to view her work and discuss possible avenues (eg. images for a calendar) TH/MW/KR

5. Pond overflow / water management: KR reported that the water was lowered on several occasions pre-Christmas. Excess vegetation has been removed again today. A photographic record is being kept.

6. Disturbed ground: No progress on spraying of ground by local residents. SB requested that the den area is cleared as it is no longer used by children. It was agreed that a working party will tidy the area and dispose of rubbish.

7. Quarry House: KR has met with two firms of roofers but no estimates has been given. One firm from the Borders was helpful but unwilling to commit to a formal estimate, suggesting a figure in the region of £35,000 for the project. A local firm was even more helpful and willing to work with us; they have slates available and will ask a scaffolder and joiner to give costs. Some preparation work could be done by volunteers. Work will not take place until September at the earliest. TH will ask a villager with expertise in planning if he can assist with the application and/or with drawings and will ask the Chair of EPC if he would be prepared to project manage. TH

8. Ponies: Both ponies are well and thinner. They are browsing well and the effect on grass is noticeable.

9. Flexigraze: SB reported that the goats seem well. Grazing has exposed bramble strands. Home produced hay is sustaining the goats well and should last for the rest of the season. More robust plants (eg gorse and thistles) are now being eaten.

10. Social media/dog mess video: Two suitable people have agreed to 'voice' the goats. SB offered the use of a microphone for recording the script; the file will be sent to the film producers. SB/TH

11. Dark Skies: MW replied to an email from Northumberland Coast NL following the last meeting and reiterated our points of view. Northumberland Coast NL have asked if the quarry can be used as part of the North East Dark Skies festival in February. This was agreed. MW will reply and ask if donations can be requested on behalf of Embleton Quarry Nature Reserve. MW

12. Working parties: Coast Care will be on site on 28 January. A working party this week will begin to tackle general duties, including bird boxes and tidying Quarry House. KR reminded volunteers that the bonfire site needs to be cleared of nails etc.

13. Species: MW requested notification of any species seen so that a new list for 2026 can be prepared. Recent tracks in the snow show the presence of fox, rabbits and deer.

14. Finance: £10,000 has been awarded by the Reece Foundation. MW has sent details of EPC account to the Foundation and has informed the Parish Clerk.

15. AOB:

Garden Party: MW has been invited to represent Embleton Quarry Nature Reserve at a Royal Garden Party.

KAVS nomination: We have been accepted for assessment and asked to provide supporting information at an assessment meeting (date to be confirmed). MW will compare progress made with the initial management plan. SB/KR will provide numbers/hours from working parties (including Coast Care). SB/KR/MW will compile a list of roles taken on by volunteers. MW will liaise with the deputy Lord Lieutenant to arrange a date for the assessment. MW
SB/KR
SB/KR/MW
MW

Trees: KR explained that NCC are offering trees for planting and asked if more could be acquired for the boundaries. MW will check what is available and request appropriate species (eg. oak, crab apple, conifers, rowan, hazel, guelder rose, shrub trees) MW

16. Date of next meeting: Monday 9th February 2026 at 7.00pm in the Creighton Hall.